Evaluating Loneliness in an Older Adult Population

Abstract

Problem: Loneliness and social isolation are severe burdens on global public health and can impair one's overall health outcomes. Unfortunately, both loneliness and social isolation are prevalent in the older adult population. The purpose of this quality improvement project was to evaluate loneliness in older adults enrolled in a weekly socialization program and its impact on loneliness.

Methods: A descriptive cohort design was utilized to analyze surveys completed three months apart. A convenience sample was used with older adults already enrolled in a weekly socialization program. The Iowa Model of Evidence-Based Practice was applied to evaluate and promote quality care in the weekly socialization program.

Results: Three months apart, there was a significant difference ($t = 2.42, p = .034$) in loneliness using the DJGLS between the initial and secondary screenings. There was a significant change ($z = -2, p = .046$) in perceived quality of life between the two points in time. There was no significant difference ($z = -1.89, p = .059$) in perceived loneliness between the initial and secondary screenings. There was not a significant difference ($t = -0.96, p = .356$) in social isolation using the LSNS-6 between the two points in time.

Implications for Practice: Weekly socialization programs can positively impact older adults’ loneliness and perceived quality of life. These programs should be used as a supplement to an older adult’s established community of family and friends.